



The consumer state of AI

Dive into generational breakdowns, top tools, use cases, pain points and more.





The AI landscape is constantly evolving. How consumers use and engage with it is, too.

Epsilon Pulse research paints a picture of consumer AI use in 2026.

At Epsilon, we've been asking consumers about how they use AI as it's become more integrated into everyday lives.

What started as a simple question: **"Do you use AI?"** has turned into inquiries about the nuances of AI use between our personal and professional lives, what AI tools get right and where they still fall short. This research also explores the various scenarios for AI use and how that differs across generations.

This is just the beginning, and there's more to come as the technology continues to change our workflows and tasks.

What's in this report?

- Generational profiles of AI use
- How often consumers use AI for personal and professional tasks (and what tools they prefer).
- Top AI use cases across generations
- How AI impacts the consumer journey from end to end
- Consumers' overall impressions of AI and how they expect to use it over time

Let's begin.

At a glance: the state of AI use in 2026

As consumer AI use increases, marketers need to adapt their strategy to make sure their messages are reaching the right people at the right time.

- Consumers who use AI platforms for personal use largely identify them as **quick and easy to use**.
- Tools like **ChatGPT, Gemini and Copilot** are rated higher on accuracy and ease of use when used for professional tasks.
- Most people **use AI for general inquiries**, followed by entertainment and fun, shopping, educational needs and work productivity.
- **Gen Z exhibit the highest AI usage for personal tasks** with 56% using it at least once per day compared to only 13% of boomers.
- **Gen Z and millennials are more likely to have a positive impression of AI** compared to older consumers, especially boomers.
- One-third of consumers say they **use AI more than they did 12 months ago**.

Quick stats

56% of Gen Z use AI at least once per day for personal tasks.

7 in 10 use AI tools for personal tasks.

3 in 5 use AI tools for professional tasks.

33% use ChatGPT, the most popular AI tool for professional and academic tasks.

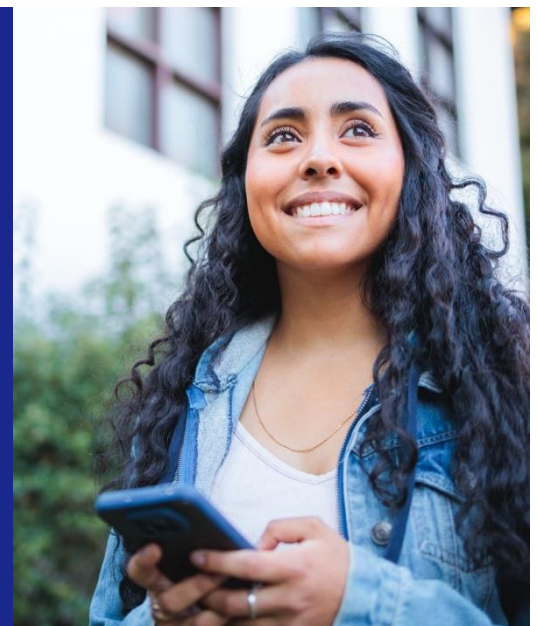
77% access AI tools via their smartphones.

60% use AI tools to shop.

Why this matters for marketers

Consumer behavior is changing drastically, and AI is directly impacting how they're interacting with brands and information today.

Understanding how consumers use AI helps you identify how to adapt your messaging to increase AI visibility and reach consumers within AI tools and platforms.



Generational profiles



Gen Z: The AI power users

Gen Z is the leader when it comes to incorporating AI into personal and professional tasks. Nearly 80% of Gen Z accesses AI tools on their smartphones (laptops come in second place).

Their top reasons for using AI include entertainment and fun, general inquiries, educational needs, health, work productivity and shopping. Gen Z also uses AI for fitness more than any other generation.

When shopping, Gen Z turns to AI for product information, price comparisons, research and looking for deals and discounts.

While they're more likely to have a positive view of AI than older consumers, Gen Z is concerned about AI's environmental impact more than any other generation.



Stats to know

91%

of Gen Z uses AI for personal tasks.

31%

of Gen Z expect to use AI more in the next six months.

58%

of Gen Z has a somewhat or extremely positive view of AI.

86%


of Gen Z uses AI to shop, higher than any generation.


Top 5 AI tools for personal tasks

 ChatGPT 65%

 Gemini 31%

 Google Assistant 23%

 Copilot 20%

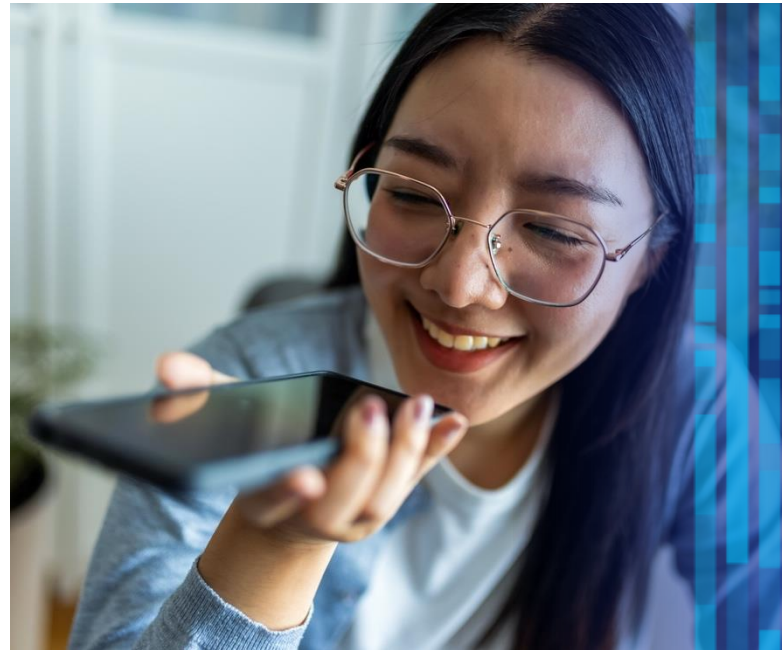
 amazon alexa 19%

Millennials: The AI advocates

Millennials might slightly trail behind Gen Z in the AI arena, but they're the technology's biggest champions. They're most likely to believe in AI's ease of use and efficiency and are more likely than other generations to say they're comfortable implementing AI suggestions without doing their own research. They also tend to trust AI over human recommendations.

Nearly 50% of millennials say their AI use has increased over the past year and that they use AI more now than ever before. They mostly use it for general inquiries, entertainment and fun, work productivity, education, health and as a digital assistant.

Millennials are more likely than Gen X and boomers to use AI for product or brand recommendations and to provide explanations for problems and topics. Other popular use cases for this generation include mental health support, creating meal plans and planning travel itineraries.



Stats to know

82%

of millennials use AI for personal tasks.

34%

of millennials expect to use AI more in the next six months.






56%

of millennials have a somewhat or extremely positive view of AI.

74%

of millennials use AI to shop.

Top 5 AI tools for personal tasks

 ChatGPT	50%
 Gemini	39%
 Copilot	21%
 Google Assistant	19%
 amazon alexa	17%

Gen X: The AI curious

While AI use and comfortability decreases with age for both professional and personal use cases, 33% of Gen X have increased their use over the past year. General inquiries are the primary reason this generation uses AI, but they also like to use it to research specific topics.

Gen X likes to use AI for content generation because they find it's easy to use, but they wish recommendations were more personalized to their needs. 54% of Gen X use AI for shopping, especially for initial product research and information seeking, to compare prices and to read reviews and ratings with an AI summary.

While AI sentiment is split among positive, negative and neutral for this generation, about three in five share concerns about AI's security and privacy features and AI replacing jobs.



Stats to know

65%

of Gen X uses AI for personal tasks.

18%

of Gen X expect to use AI more in the next six months.






37%

of Gen X have a somewhat or extremely positive view of AI .

34%

of Gen X use AI to shop.

Top 5 AI tools for personal tasks

 ChatGPT	28%
 Gemini	27%
 Google Assistant	17%
 amazon alexa	17%
 Copilot	16%

Boomers: The AI skeptics

Boomers make up the smallest share of AI users, but how they're using the technology is still worth exploring.

Nearly 50% of this generation say they've never used AI, but 19% say their AI use has increased over the past year and 11% expect their AI use to increase in the next six months. 72% of boomers have security and privacy concerns about AI and 66% worry about AI replacing human jobs. That being said, 50% use AI to compare prices when shopping and 42% use it to look for deals and discounts.

More so than Gen Z and Gen X, boomers use AI tools as a digital assistant to save time. Like Gen X and millennials, boomers also use AI for information on health symptoms and diseases. Smartphones are the top device boomers use to access AI tools, but 40% say they use a laptop and 37% say they use a desktop computer.



Stats to know

48%

of boomers use AI for personal tasks.

11%

of boomers expect to use AI more in the next six months.

34%

of boomers have a somewhat or extremely positive view of AI.

42%


of boomers use AI to shop.


Top 5 AI tools for personal tasks

 ChatGPT 13%

 Gemini 13%

 Google Assistant 13%

 amazon alexa 12%

 Copilot 10%

Key findings

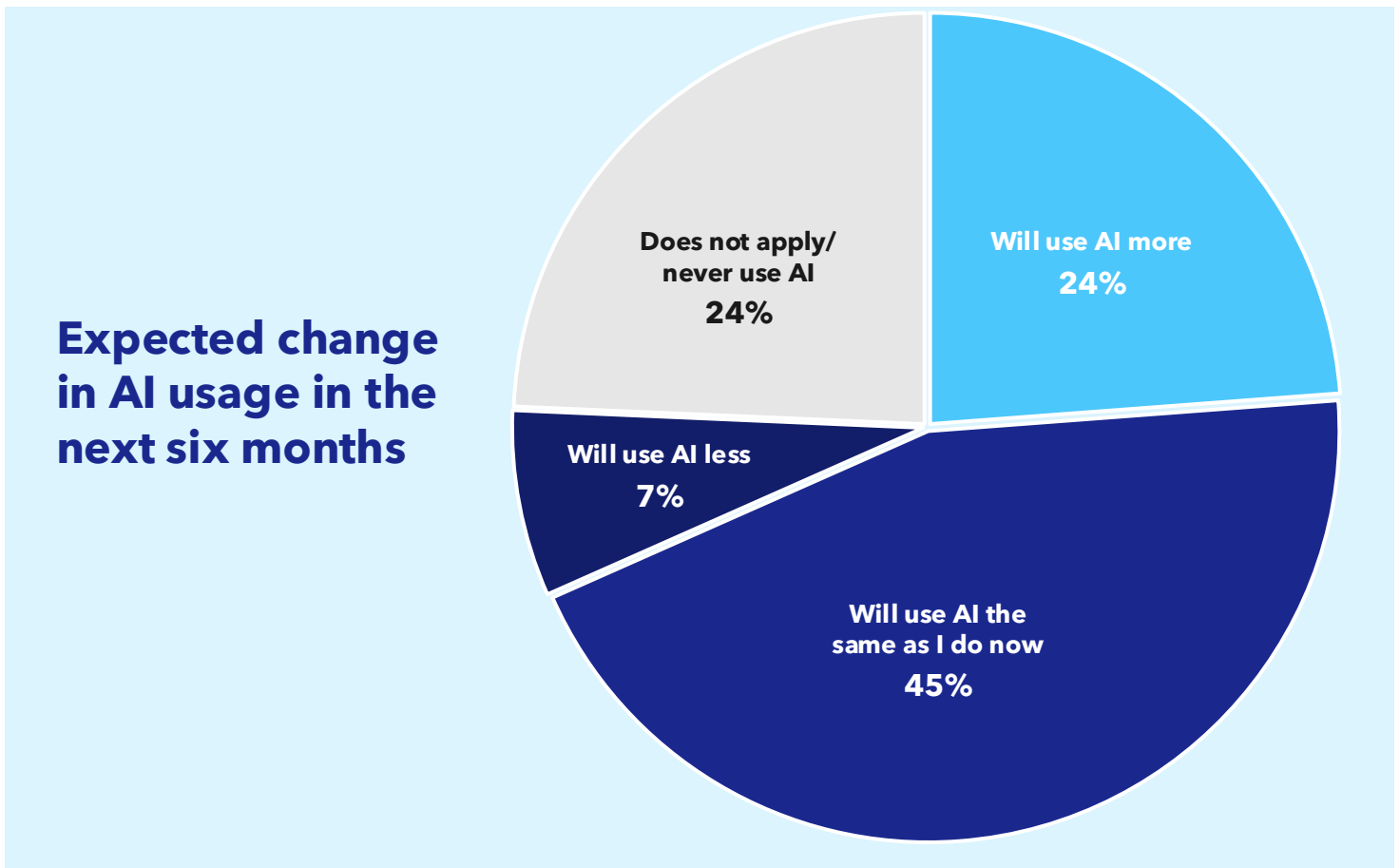


KEY FINDINGS

One-third of consumers say they use AI now more than ever before.

More than any other age group, **millennials are using AI more than they were a year ago**. Many Gen Z are using AI the same amount as a year ago, but 1 in 10 say they're using AI less now. Boomers are most likely to report that they have never used AI.

When we asked consumers to look ahead, **24% say they expect to use AI more in the next six months**. The top reasons consumers said they'd increase their use are that AI tools are becoming easier to use, more accessible and more readily available. Privacy and security concerns were listed as the top reason for users expecting to decrease their use.



31% of Gen Z say they think their AI usage will increase in the next six months

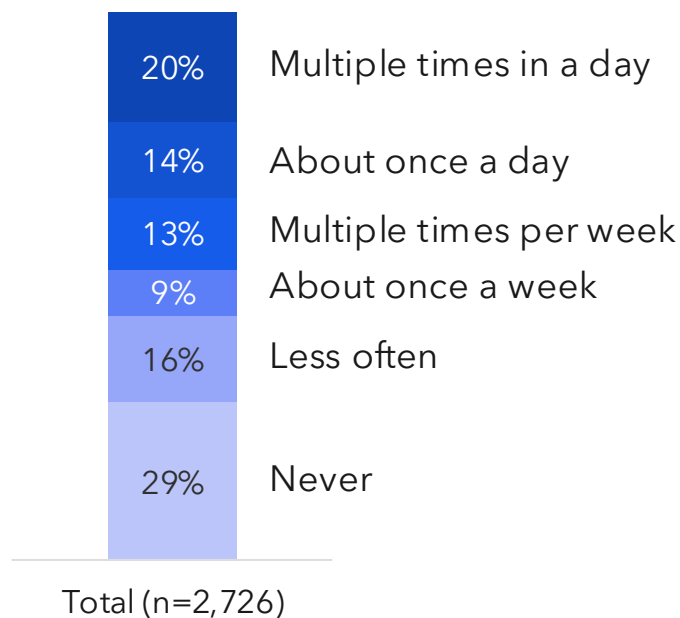
KEY FINDINGS

AI is increasingly becoming a part of everyday life with 34% using it at least once per day.

Younger generations are far more likely to use AI than older generations, and usage of AI tends to decrease with age. Nearly **20% of Gen Z and millennials use AI about once per day**, and the numbers are similar for Gen Z for professional use (it dips slightly for millennials at 12%). Boomers are more likely than other generations to say they've never used AI, regardless of use case.

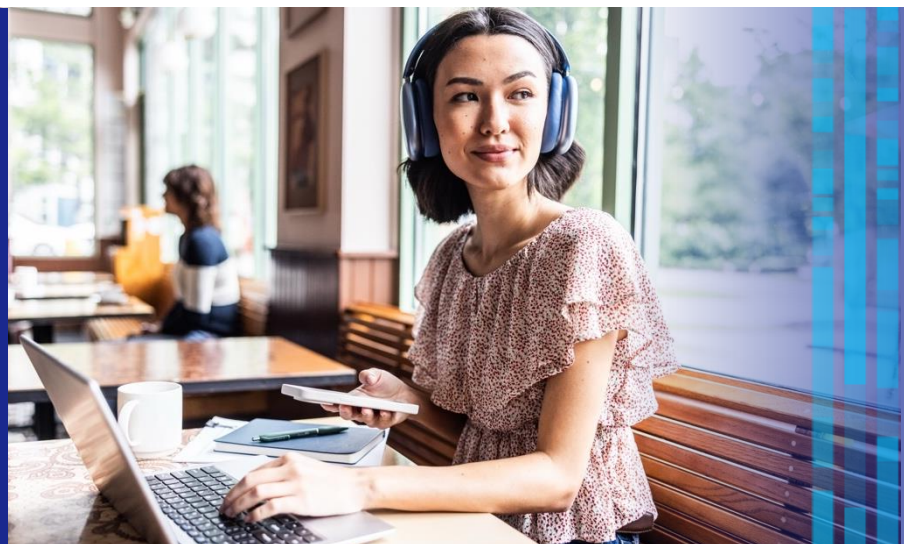
AI usage frequency

Personal life (everyday tasks, personal goals, hobbies, chores, etc.)



35%

of Gen Z uses AI multiple times per day, higher than all other generations.



KEY FINDINGS

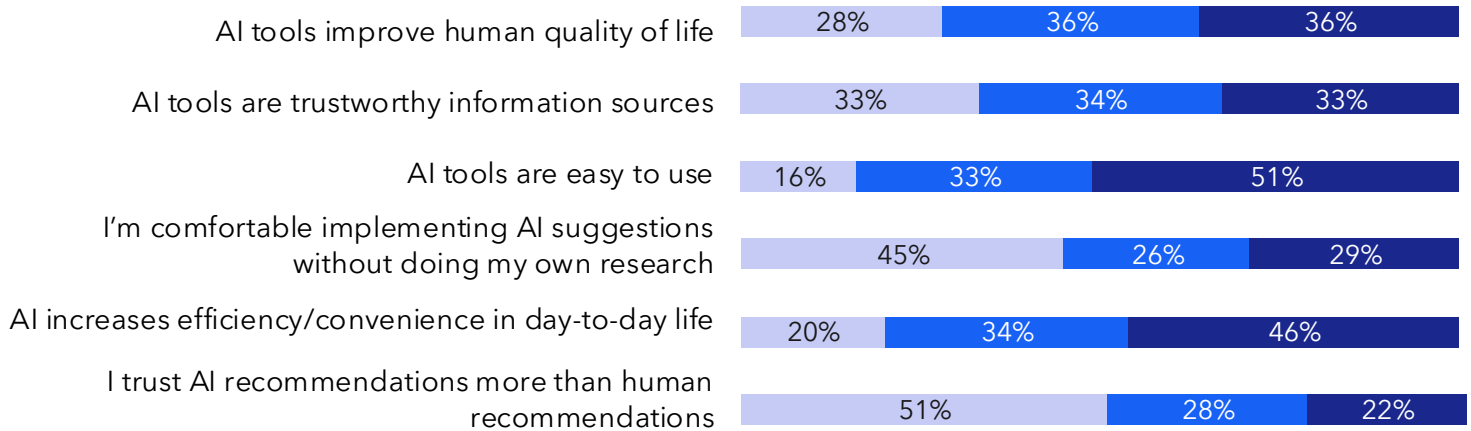
Data privacy and security, job replacement, and inaccuracy are consumers' primary concerns about AI.

A smaller percentage are **concerned about the environment** and aren't sure when and how to use the technology. **Fifty-one percent of consumers find AI tools easy to use**, and **46% find that AI increases convenience in day-to-day life**. The top drivers of negative AI sentiment are worries about privacy and security, fear of losing jobs to AI and concerns over accuracy.

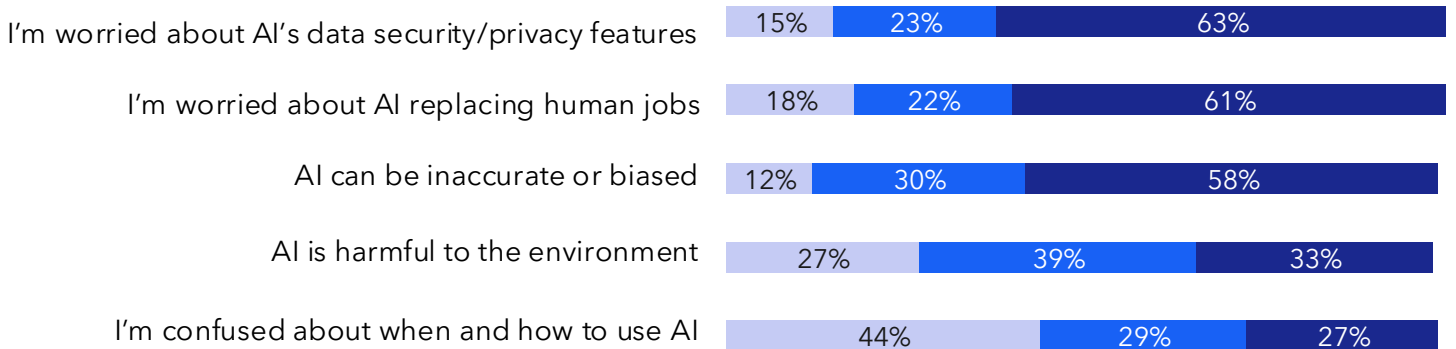
Perceptions about AI

■ Strongly/ somewhat disagree
 ■ Neutral/ I do not know
 ■ Strongly/ somewhat agree

Positive



Negative



Total n=2,726

44%

Of consumers have a somewhat or extremely positive view about AI. That number jumps to 58% of Gen Z and 56% of millennials.

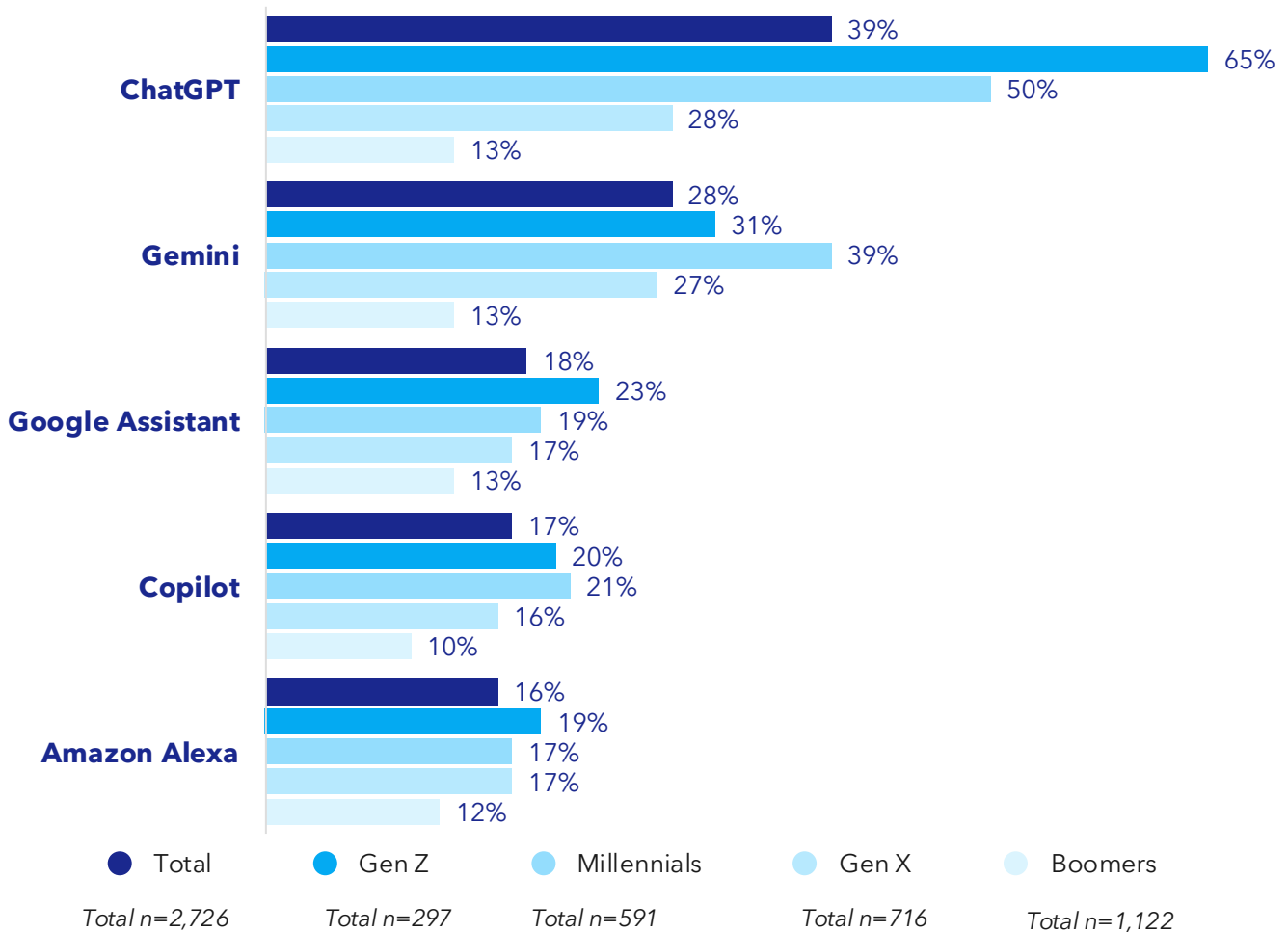


KEY FINDINGS

ChatGPT is the most popular AI tool for personal and professional use, with Gen Z using it the most.

ChatGPT is used the most often across generations, but millennials use Gemini more than any other generation, and Gen Z uses Siri more than any generation. When it comes to tool attributes, the most popular tools are mostly seen as quick and easy and can improve on personalization and accuracy.

The top 5 most popular AI tools for personal use across generations



64%

say Gemini is easy to use and offers quick results.





KEY FINDINGS

Smartphones are the most popular device across generations for accessing AI tools.

77% percent of consumers use a smartphone to access AI tools, and the number jumps to 79% of Gen Z and 84% of millennials. Fifty percent of millennials say they use a laptop—higher than all other generations.

Devices used to access AI platforms

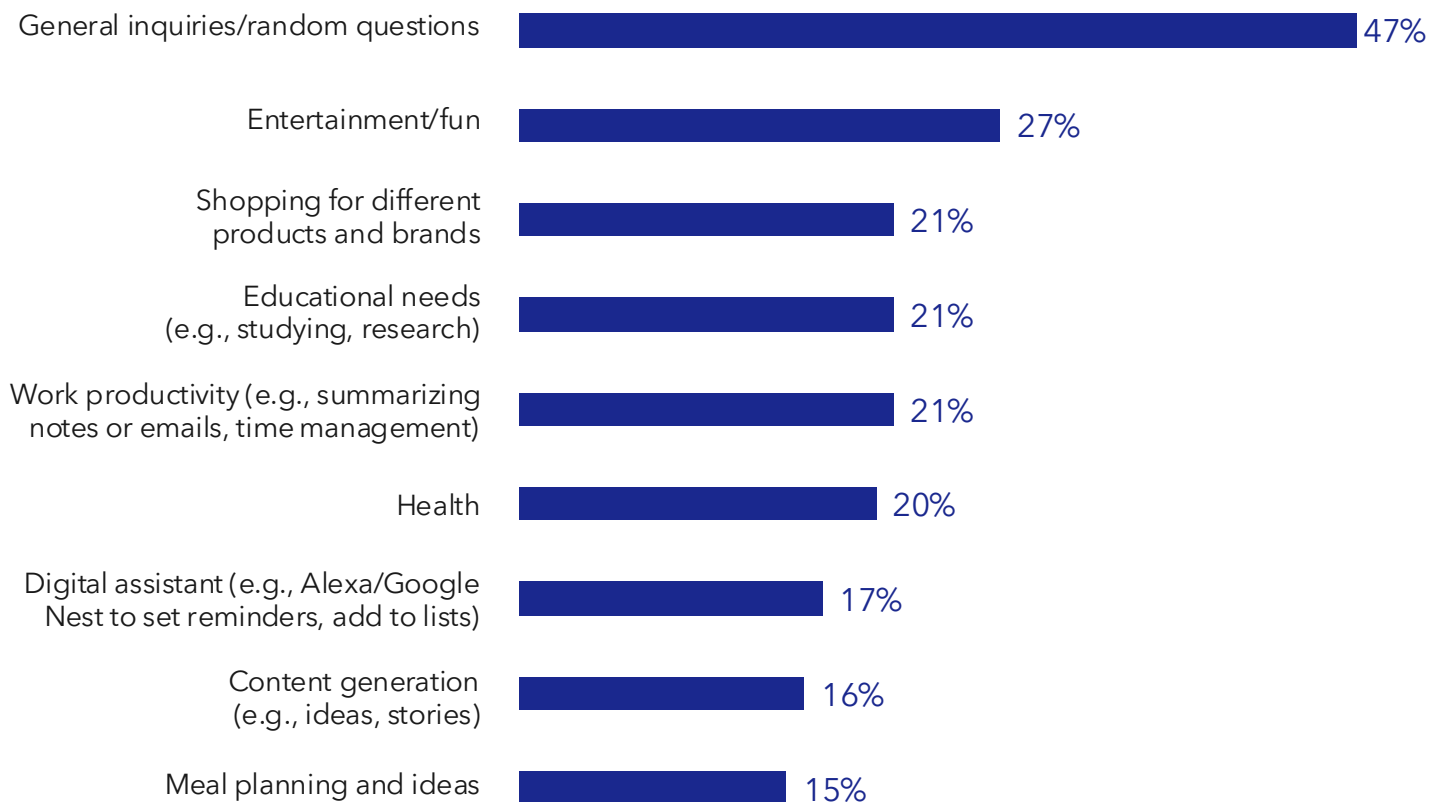
	Total	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers
Smartphone	77%	79%	84%	74%	64%
Laptop	43%	38%	50%	43%	40%
Desktop computer	30%	25%	30%	31%	37%
iPad/tablet	26%	33%	23%	23%	22%
Smart speakers (e.g., Echo, Google Nest)	19%	15%	20%	20%	20%
	(n=1,701)	(n=271)	(n=469)	(n=457)	(n=504)

KEY FINDINGS

Shopping and entertainment are the top AI use cases beyond general inquiries.

But consumers use AI for a wide variety of use cases, and when it comes to tools, **ChatGPT is the top tool in virtually all cases**. Consumers like using AI to save time and for ease of use, but they get frustrated when the information is unreliable or not personalized enough.

Top 10 reasons for using AI



Total (n=2,726)

Get the full story

Get a deep dive into each use case we asked consumers about, including top reasons for using AI, drawbacks and the tools consumers used for each one.

[Reach out to an Epsilon expert](#)

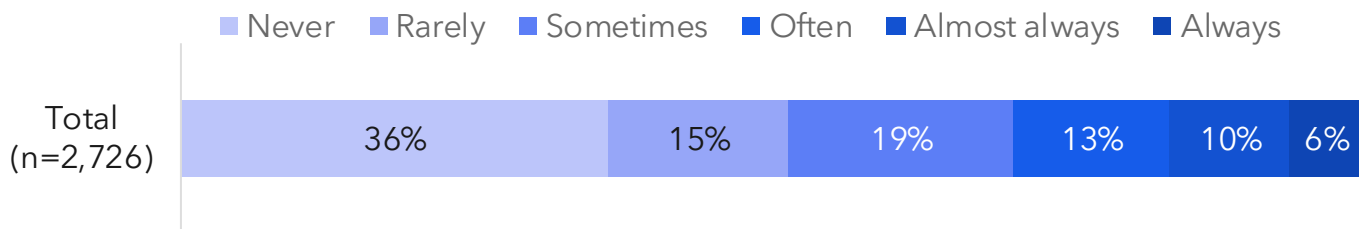


KEY FINDINGS

6 in 10 consumers use AI when shopping, especially younger generations.

Naturally, online searches and retailer website visits are the most popular first step people take when shopping, but AI is increasingly becoming a part of the consumer journey. **Twenty-one percent of consumers use AI platforms to learn more about a product they're interested in buying**, and that number jumps to 32% of Gen Z and 31% of millennials.

Frequency of using AI when shopping



The top use cases for using AI when shopping online are initial research, product and price comparison, and to search for deals and discounts. More than one in three consumers exit AI platforms when they need more information on the product from the website, to read customer reviews or when they want to check out the product in person.

How consumers use AI when they shop



Key takeaways



Key takeaways



1 **Fragmented discovery makes a unified customer view more critical.**

As product discovery and research fragments across AI, mobile devices, brand sites and physical locations, brands with a unified view of their customers can deliver more cohesive and effective experiences across channels.



2 **AI-driven deal discovery increases pressure on loyalty and retention strategies.**

While AI makes it easier for consumers to quickly compare brands and prices, brands that invest in loyalty, personalization and lifecycle marketing are better positioned to retain customers beyond a single transaction.



3 **Value-seeking behavior raises expectations for personalization.**

Consumers are becoming more value-driven, so generic offers will lose their effectiveness, and personalized engagement will become table stakes for brands to succeed.



4 **Choose partners that are evolving how they're reaching consumers and AI in marketing activations.**

As AI tools increasingly become a part of the shopping journey, it'll be more critical for brands to optimize their media strategy to incorporate AI tools.



Ready to reach AI users with relevant messaging? An Epsilon expert can help.

Build, understand and reach audiences that convert.

Know what's important to your customers and prospects to better connect with them.



Use your best customers to find more just like them.



Retarget lapsed customers with personalized incentives and loyalty rewards.



Segment customers based on key attitudes that drive purchase.

Featured audiences

Use these featured audiences to reach your customers across channels, or talk to an Epsilon expert to help you build a custom audience.



Technology early adopters



Mobile browsers



Research-driven consumers



Heavy mobile purchasers

Looking for more data?

Learn more about how marketers are using AI in our report.



What's inside:

- An overview of AI adoption in marketing
- What's driving brands to invest in AI
- How much budget they're allocating to AI tools and technologies
- How marketers are measuring success
- Challenges, barriers to adoption and lessons learned
- Key recommendations on how to approach AI—no matter where you're at in your maturity

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Methodology

Survey respondents (Total n=2,726)

To qualify for the research, respondents had to be between 18 and 77 years of age. Sample was weighted (by age and gender) to align with census distribution.

	Number of completes (unweighted base)	Sample distribution for reporting (weighted)
Gen Z (18 to 28 yrs old)	297	21%
Millennials (29 to 44 yrs old)	591	29%
Gen X (45 to 60 yrs old)	716	26%
Boomers (61 to 77 yrs old)	642	24%

This survey was in field from February 2 to February 11, 2026.

Know people better. Market smarter.

Epsilon®

Epsilon gives brands the identity, AI and data they need to truly understand people. And when you understand people, your marketing becomes more personal, more relevant and more effective.

Identity & AI

Recognize real people everywhere, in real time. We pair identity and AI to create a complete, person-level understanding that drives relevant, scalable engagement.

CDP

See the full picture of your customers. Epsilon's identity-powered CDP unifies, expands and enriches your first-party data so you can understand people clearly and activate across channels with privacy built in.

Loyalty

Build smarter, more personal loyalty strategies. Backed by activation expertise, we help brands design and evolve programs that deepen engagement and drive measurable growth.

Clean room

Get more than an empty container.

Our clean room comes with the data, identity resolution and intelligence marketers need to enrich first-party data, uncover deeper audience insight, activate with confidence and measure impact from day one.

Digital media

Unify data, identity and activation into one solution. Brands gain the clarity and control to reach real people, reduce waste and drive stronger performance across every channel.

"Being able to combine our knowledge of health and well-being with the data, tools, knowledge and insights that Epsilon brings to the table allows us to create the strong, lasting customer connections we strive for."

Tracey D. Brown, President of Walgreens Retail and Chief Customer Officer

Learn more about the platform that powers it all.

Go from insight to activation in one connected platform, Epsilon PeopleCloud.

epsilon.com/peoplecloud